

# EVOLVING ECONOMIES

## Challenge

The Town of Chesterton is located in Northwest Indiana, and is the third largest community in Porter County. For years, the steel industry was Chesterton's primary economic base. With the recent collapse and resurgence of the industry, however, the Town was forced to take a closer look at the structure of the local economy. Attracting family-wage jobs to replace those lost in the steel industry is a high priority not only for Chesterton, but also for the surrounding communities in Porter and Lake Counties. The push to restructure local economies has spurred intense competition between cities and counties for new development.

## Action

To diversify the economy, Chesterton needed to attract new development companies. The Town produced custom packages to entice commercial and industrial developers from around the world. GIS was used to create maps and charts showing information vital to these companies: population growth, land use, transportation planning, economic conditions, natural areas, hazard mitigation, and infrastructure management. These maps and charts highlighted the benefits of locating in Chesterton, and identified prime development opportunities.



*Proposed development sites showing potential investors the benefits of locating in Chesterton*

## Results

Location is everything! And GIS has been an invaluable marketing tool. Chesterton has been able to effectively sell the benefits of the community - and specific locations - to developers. The maps and data charts give corporations a way to see the transportation network, infrastructure, and other land factors, and how these things will impact them. Using GIS as a tool in the development packages helps Chesterton successfully compete for economic growth on a global level.